THE FOURTH DAY.

21st February 1918.

The Assembly met at 11-45 A. M. on Thursday, the 21st February 1918.

47. Agricultural Education.

Mr. J. Kamalam (Member, T. I. C., Attungal) first spoke about the importance of agriculture in the development of the material resources of the State and the necessity for giving a vocational side to the present system of education by the introduction of agricultural education. The suggestions of the Member were (1) to make the present generation of farmers more efficient by diffusing among them a knowledge of the scientific principles underlying agriculture and (2) to give the farmers of the future, *i. e.*, the school-going population of the present day, a sound training in agricultural science and practice.

Dewan's reply.—The Director of Public Instruction has already been asked to send up a scheme of Agricultural Education in consultation with the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries.

43. Adoption of measures for increasing the food supply of the State so as to meet the local demand by improving and extending paddy cultivation.

Mr. K. Thomman Dominic (Member, Peermade taluk) urged the necessity of increasing the output of paddy and gave statistics of the import of paddy and rice for the past three years. The best way of meeting the situation was by expanding the area under paddy. It was gratifying that better methods were being introduced in *punja* cultivation. If *punja* and *cherikal* lands could be cultivated annually, the quantity of paddy for local consumption would be largely increased. Recently, Government threw open for paddy cultivation 2,000 acres of swampy lands from forest reserves. That was a most commendable step. But larger areas of a similar nature were still available in the forest reserves. All such tracts should be thrown open for registry after inspection by a Committee consisting of the Conservator of Forests, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries and the local Dewan Peishkar.

Dewan's reply.—Noted. I may inform the Member that I have myself seen some of the Reserved Forests. The expert opinion on the subject—and this is the view I also formed after my inspection—is that it will be prejudicial to the interests of the forests, if *all* lands which *may* be suitable for cultivation are set apart for the purpose.

49. Need for investigating the continued failure of paddy crops and scarcity of drinking water in some parts of Edanad.

Mr. K. N. Padmanabha Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Padmanabhapuram) submitted that, though the Kodayar Irrigation scheme had benefited some portion of Edanad, there was in it a tract of land, 35 square miles in area with a population of about 40,000 who paid Rs. 20,000 as tax, which was not only unirrigated but was totally neglected. The chief occupation of the people in that tract was jaggery industry which, for several reasons, had almost died out. The only other industry was agriculture. Two other industries in which the people could be engaged with profit to themselves and benefit to the State, *viz.*, the monazite and fibre (palmyra), had passed into the hands of foreigners. The only other industry remaining to be taken up was mica.

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Dewan.—If you can find any persons or companies in Travancore to work the mica mines, Government would be glad to help them in all reasonable ways by granting concessions. This information is meant for all the Members of the Assembly.

Member.—Thank you, Sir, I shall try.

Another industry awaiting development was plumbago. The portion of Edanad referred to above had 18,000 acres of garden lands and 27,000 acres of wet lands. With a little convenience for irrigation the garden lands could easily be converted into smiling paddy fields which would go a long way to increase the food supply in the land. The prevailing scarcity of water had been a serious handicap to the agricultrists. The Kodayar scheme, instead of supplying water, had in one sense brought about water famine. For, there was a large number of tanks where water used to be stored for agricultural purposes and every year a certain amount of money was being spent to maintain those tanks. But, in expectation of the Kodayar water, those old tanks had become disused and were neglected. It was, therefore, necessary to renovate those tanks and restore them at the cost of Government. As there was a large area of land on a higher elevation, pumps might be installed and tube-wells sunk. It was not possible to describe the acuteness of the scarcity of water. The Member submitted that the unspent Government grant for the past 10 or 15 years could be utilized for the purposes mentioned by him. In conclusion, the Member requested that enquiries might be ordered to be made by the Dewan Peishkar and further action taken.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

50. Need for remedying the difficulties experienced by ryots in the Vilavancode taluk.

Mr. N. Sankaranarayana Pillai (Member, Vilavancode Taluk) described the precarious agricultural conditions of the taluk and observed that the people of the taluk depended entirely on rain water for cultivation. The last crop was an utter failure on account of untimely showers and, in spite of the Kuzhithura river, they were always suffering from scarcity of water. The Government were spending on an average Rs. 5,500 in connection with the repair of irrigation tanks. When the Right Bank Channel was proposed to be cut, the expenditure on the tanks was stopped. The Member's request was that the work of extending the Right Bank Channel be proceeded with and completed, as it would fertilize not only the Vilavancode taluk but a major portion of the Neyyattinkara taluk also. If that was not possible, the Mannanpara dam, about 6 miles further down the Pechippara Works, which only required some repairs, might be put in order and a channel cut to take the surplus water, now running to waste, to paddy fields thirsting for water. That would benefit Neyyattinkara also. If that was done, a water cess might also be levied and the Government would be able to realize a good sum of money from the sale of lands. The above grievances were represented at several sessions of the Assembly with no good result. The people were also prepared to meet a portion of the expenditure by raising a fund from among themselves. The Member, therefore, requested an early solution of the problem.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

51. Agricultural difficulties of the Shencottah Taluk.

Mr. S. Subrahmanya Karayalar B. A. (Member, Shencottah Taluk) said that the urgent need of Shencottah was the supply of enough water for agricultural purposes. The Tank Restoration Scheme had not improved matters much, as the water-holding capacity of the reservoirs had not undergone any change, nor had the scheme benefited channel-fed lands. One-half of Shencottah taluk was being served by two small rivers which were likely to be affected, if the coupe system of clearing the forests were persisted in. For, such clearing would dry up the springs. It was,

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